WRL NEWS

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WRL CALLS FOR TAX REBELLION

by David McReynolds

At the Expanded Executive Committee meeting February 21-22, it was felt the time had come to launch a "multi-level" Taxpayers Rebellion, one that would begin on April 15, but carry on through the year.

Tax Resistance is not a new idea but it has been one that seemed to call for great personal courage, or to be virtually impossible for many people who have their taxes withheld by the employer. The handful of people who have had their homes or cars seized or, in a very few cases, have been jailed, have been heroes—they had our respect, but few of us felt able to follow in their footsteps.

The key word in the Executive Committee decision is the substitution of the word *rebellion*—implying mass action—for the traditional word *resistance.* And the key concept is *multi-level.* It has always been true that if a person had enough courage, was willing to endure enough poverty, or take enough risks, that they could get by without paying any federal tax.

But most of us simply—for good reasons or from human frailty—were never able to take on the burden of direct tax resistance. Our husbands or wives would not agree, our willingness to face jail or risk seizure of property or loss of job was limited, etc.

It is important to understand that the life situations people face are very different—a self-employed writer or artist can more easily resist paying the tax than a trade unionist who has it taken out of the weekly pay check; a young unmarried person risks much less in a confrontation

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The Walk Passes Through L.A.

LOCAL ORGANIZING PICKS UP

by Ed Hedemann

photo by Joe Bradley

On the road between Santa Cruz and Watsonville.

Three hundred continental walkers strode through Los Angeles on Sunday March 7 which resulted in some national media coverage. The CBS-TV morning news of March 10 mentioned the Walk's entrance in L.A. and noted that Dan Ellsberg was one of the walkers that day.

The day before, all 425 seats in the Loyola-Marymount auditorium were sold out for the Mimi Farina benefit concert. The concert also featured Dan Ellsberg and some of the members of the Japan Buddhist Sanga.

Along the California coast the size of the Walk varied from 50 to 200 (in Santa Cruz). Currently, the number of walkers is around 80 to 90 as the Walk proceeds towards Riverside, 50 miles east of L.A.

This Walk, which is perhaps one of

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TAX REBELLION

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with the government than a man or woman who may be responsible for children, who may risk losing retirement benefits and seniority if they are fired, etc.

Thus a "multi-level" approach does *not* assume that some of us are heroes and some are not, but rather that each of us acts within the limits of our insight and our position. Put another way, if each person takes as great a risk *as they are able to at that moment,* then all who act are acting with equal courage.

We realize that for millions of Americans the mere act of filing the tax forms *one day late* will break a great psychological barrier. To overcome our fear is the greatest task, and the multi-level approach does that. As spelled out in the enclosed flyer, the "multi-level" approach makes it possible to join the Tax Rebellion at a number of points, from something as totally legal as filing on time but with an enclosure making it clear we pay under protest, right on through to total refusal to cooperate.

The Tax Rebellion must be *politically* clear to the community—it is *not* a basic fight against taxation, but against the fact that our very limited tax funds are spent on corporation bribes, on compiling dossiers on us, on building new weapons systems which not only speed up the arms race but aren't even militarily sound—all of this while funds are not available for housing, medical care, care for the elderly, etc. 1776 to 1976, the Boston Tea Party to a massive Taxpayers Revolt. It is a good year to remind those who govern us, that it is only by our consent. And it is a very good year to remind ourselves that if we give that consent without rebellion, we ourselves become part of the conspiracy against our own freedoms.

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FUNDS FOR J.P.'s DIALSER

J.P. Narayan, the well-known Indian pacifist released from jail last November because of his critical health condition, now needs a portable home dialser. Since his kidneys are not functioning, he must rely on dyalsis perhaps for the rest of his life. Presently he has to go to Jaslok Hospital for his treatment every alternate day.

The cost of a portable home dialser is estimated at $65,000. Americans who want to help purchase one for J.P. can make out a check to "FOR-JP Fund" and mail it to FOR, Box 271, Nyack, N.Y. 10960.

SUGGESTIONS FOR CHILDREN'S BOOKS . . .

. . . (for children up to 12) which can be added to the WRL literature list. The books must be non-sexist, non-racist, non-consumerist and, of course, non-militarist. Suggestions should be sent to WRL Literature Committee, c/o Van Zwisohn, RD 2, Box 157, Clarkstown, N.J. 07825.

WRL NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Hold August 11–14, for the annual WRL Conference to be held at Brandywine Valley Camp in Downingtown, Pa. More details later.

WRL STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The War Resisters League affirms that war is a crime against humanity. We therefore are determined not to support any kind of war, international or civil, and to strive nonviolently for the removal of all the causes of war.

☐ I support this statement and wish to enroll as a member of the WAR RESISTERS LEAGUE.

signature

address

city

state zip code

Send to War Resisters League
339 Lafayette Street, New York, N.Y. 10012

MY $600,000 DAMAGE SUIT AGAINST THE FBI

by Jim Peck

It was filed on March 2 in Federal District Court by my attorney, Leonard Boudin, well-known to peace people because of the Spock and Ellsberg cases. It is based on testimony December 1 by Gary Rowe, Jr., an FBI undercover operative in Birmingham, Ala., on May 14, 1961, the day of the arrival of the first Freedom Riders, when I was so severely beaten by a Klan mob that I required 53 stitches in my head.

Rowe testified on Dec. 1 in Washington that, although the FBI knew about the planned assault on Freedom Riders three weeks in advance, no preventive action was taken and, in fact, the Department of Justice was not even notified. Actually, I almost was killed *because* the FBI acted in collusion with the Klan and "Bull" Connor, the notoriously racist police chief of police dog fame.

"Since I still am alive, I feel an obligation to file this suit—to do my part in trying to avert a repeat performance of the FBI's aiding and abetting a crime in the interest of maintaining an unjust—and illegal—status quo (in the Birmingham case, racial segregation in interstate travel)." That's what I said in a statement distributed to the media at a press conference in the office of Boudin who undertook the case on behalf of the National Emergency Civil Liberties Committee.

I went on to point out that although J. Edgar Hoover, whom I view as a very sick person, is dead, "his concept that the FBI should assume a role of political intimidation, as does the secret police in totalitarian countries, still prevails today. I cited the FBI's persecution of members of the Socialist Workers Party and its recent witchhunt on organizations and individuals involved in the amnesty campaign.

Dave McReynolds to Tour Midwest

April 18 through 24, Dave McReynolds of National WRL staff will be in Oklahoma, Kansas, and Missouri, and April 25 through May 1 in Illinois, Wisconsin, Indiana and Michigan. He will be speaking on disarmament, the economic crisis, the Continental Walk, and directions for the pacifist movement in the post-Vietnam period. If you are interested in having him in your area, please contact the National WRL office immediately.

WHAT STANCE SHOULD WRL TAKE? III

(continuation of the discussion which started in the Nov.-Dec. issue)

by Claire Gorfinkel

Somehow the question seems wrong: What stance should WRL take? I see the Marlboro man taking his STANCE at the top of the mountain ready to conquer the west. But this does not seem to be the issue for Dave or Roy. Roy says there aren't enough of us and we're too Marxist/Socialist; he asks about efficiency. Dave answers with history and democratic process, "besides," he says, "leftists have good politics." The tone of the discussion seems wrong. I'm tempted to say it's irrelevant and quit there, but I believe it's important to follow through and try to suggest why, and beyond that to enter into the discussion of priorities in our work for the time ahead.

To begin, I agree with Dave: the reign of violence cannot end without profound structural change – a social revolution. Further, I venture to say that change–revolution–is by definition more likely to come from the left: radicals, activists, socialists, even anarchists, than from the "right," by definition, conservatives. Perhaps uncommitted middle America provides our membership eventually, but the "left," loosely defined, has provided the allies and friends who have helped us make and carry out programs. Yet it remains important to construct our programs and our language to offer alternatives to the center and the "right."

So I also agree with Roy that we should reach out to Middle America, but I don't feel that Roy's description of "us"–the League–fits my impression/experience. Neither am I very pleased with Dave's "you can vote us out; We're hired. We don't represent the League, you do."

In part, this is precisely the stance I think WRL should NOT take. I'm not interested in voting out committees or firing Dave but I wish he'd (and they'd) come to terms with the fact that they *do* make decisions on our behalf and in our name–in the name of the League as a whole and its National Committee. (An example: minutes of meetings arrive months after the meeting; *immediate responses* (votes) on questions are solicited but there's no feedback on how the vote/issue came out. So I'm on the National Committee but when there is no prior consultation its decisions don't reflect my input; nor apparently, that of regional staff.) This leads to one of two choices for the League National Staff: either you take responsibility for carrying out the decisions you make rather than assuming the cooperation/goodwill of the League and its "allies" across the land *or* you enter into a genuine dialogue/conversation with the people *prior* to making commitments. You have full consultation so that people can take responsibility for the decisions that affect their lives. (I know, that's old SDS rhetoric. Left again.)

Roy refers to the Women's Movement "reverberating" and bringing "fresh currents." Several years ago I had the same reaction to being told how "you young people" are going to reform the world, and all that. We, who call ourselves "feminists" now (and we're not *only* women) are asking WRL not to estimate either its strength or its validity in terms of numbers of people reached or converted, nor to congratulate itself on the democratic nature of its processes. We ask:

One: that the style of WRL begin to reflect the vision of the world after the revolution we hope to make (it's called living like the revolution's already come; the Weatherwomen–even they–called it "Hard Work and a Fine Life.") That means integrity, respect, *shared* decision-making, moving slowly with concern and care for others, listening, being patient with those of lesser experience or different style, not responding to every crisis because it's there but choosing meaningful tactics which can be carried out with quality, time, and sensitivity to the needs of those involved.

Two: That *without turning from* protesting wars and preventing wars (campaigns such as disarmament, watchdogging government intervention, etc.), WRL genuinely commit itself to dealing with the causes of war, i.e., exploitation, oppression, racism, sexism, within our ranks and in the institutions that control our lives and those of others in our nation and abroad.

Three: That regional autonomy be recognized and affirmed–thus the National Office should serve to help us explore nationwide trends and priorities, find consensus, shape consensus into nationwide programs, provide literature and backup, but by-and-large programs, in order to be effective, must be decided and carried out on local levels. (Similarly, the folks in the National Office work on local New York issues and regions don't participate in those decisions.)

It seems to me that the core of a commitment to nonviolent social change and to nonviolent lives is a commitment to the integrity and sensitivity of the individuals among us and those we are trying to reach. Without those commitments we have little to offer anyone and little reason to expect that genuine change will occur.

WRI/IFOR Women's Consultation

The WRI/IFOR Women's Consultation, a conference by and for women in the international nonviolence movement, will take place in central Europe summer 1976. The dates will be either July 13-18 or July 6-11 to be determined later this month. The Consultation will last five days running from Tuesday noon through Sunday noon. The basic themes of the Consultation include:

What is our experience as women in the nonviolent movement?

What needs changing and how?

What is a nonviolent feminist analysis?

What are nonviolent feminists' contribution to, and relationship with a) the nonviolent movement, b) the feminist movement?

The goals of the Women's Consultation include experience sharing, beginning a basis for future dialogue and action across cultures and languages, clarifying priorities for women working for nonviolent revolution and two statements: communicating the relevance of a feminist analysis to the nonviolent movement; communicating the importance of nonviolence to the feminist movement.

For further information contact Kate Sheehan, War Resisters International, 35 Rue van Elewyck, Bruxelles 1050, Belgium.

WALK

(continued)

the most ambitious experiments of decentralized organizing on a continent-wide scale, has resulted in a huge number of local and regional organizing committees. There are now plans for 20 routes in addition to the one from California to Washington, D.C. All of the 25 largest metropolitan areas in the United States will be touched by one of the Walk routes, to say nothing of the countless small towns along the way—a marvelous opportunity for outreach.

One of the successes of the Walk so far has been the terrific local publicity as well as the ability of local organizers to stir up interest and participation in Walk activities. The following report from Santa Cruz organizer, Snow Mountain, illustrates one such success: "we had peace and social justice groups set up booths in a large auditorium-type room where fairgoers could wander, discuss, pick up literature, etc. Then in four other side rooms we scheduled workshops—including slide shows, movies, puppet shows, singing, and discussions. These were *very* well attended. Our soup and salad dinner went very well, too. Almost all the food was donated and the soup was cooked the day before. Everyone had plenty and we served over 100. Later we had a poetry and music program with our local artists. There was a lot of inspiring material. The finale was a rock 'n' roll band whose music revived our tired souls . . . When it was time to close, everyone helped clean up and we were done in 15-20 minutes! People volunteered to help, took responsibility and when something needed doing, one had only to mention it and it was done—all in a tremendous spirit of love and community—wow! what a day!

"Our Santa Cruz Walk committee is continuing to meet. We plan to send out a newsletter advising our mailing list folks of upcoming events and encouraging them to keep working for disarmament and social justice. We are planning a party for our committee. Also, each of us has found a particular interest among the groups and causes at the fair and we'll be working on our issues and sharing with each other about them."

Long distance walker, Carl Champney, reports that after the Walk paraded through Santa Cruz with its "Trident monster," 20 to 25 people dropped "dead" in front of a downtown sidewalk cafe. Each bore a sign stating various nuclear death causes. A "live" demonstrator

Photo by J.C. Stockwell

Passerby studies walk leaflet.

gave a verbal explanation.

Though most of the Walk's media coverage has been in the areas it has touched, some breakthroughs have begun nationally (aside from the UPI San Francisco telephoto and the CBS L.A. report) with articles in papers such as the Boston Globe and Washington Post. There was even a small sympathetic article on the editorial page of the Bombay (India) News.

The Walk scored a minor victory by securing an extension of the visas for 3 of the Japanese Buddhist walkers. The U.S. Immigration Service has made a recent policy of not extending visas to anyone—not even issuing the applications for extensions! The first team of Buddhists had visas which expired March 17; however they became so attached to the Walk, that they sought to get extensions until October 18 to allow them to walk all the way to Washington. Their attempts were unsuccessful until the U.S. Immigration Service got deluged with letters requesting the extensions.

WALKERS ARRESTED

Two walkers were arrested February 10 for leafleting on Fort Ord, a major training base for the Army.

On February 22, eight walkers were arrested for unlawful entry onto the Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power plant site near San Luis Obispo. The arrested walkers were charged with trespassing and failure to move for a police vehicle. PG & E, the coastal utilities company which owns the Diablo Canyon site, pressed for reduction or dismissal of charges because of the resultant publicity up and down the coast. Five of the arrested were fined $125, and charges were dropped against the other three. The Diablo Canyon site has already gotten adverse publicity nationally because of a nearby earthquake fault.

The day before, the Continental Walk paraded through San Luis Obispo with the "Trident monster" (a long yellow rope held high by bamboo poles with 408 dangling black plastic streamers representing the 408 nuclear warheads on each Trident submarine), according to walker Fred Moore. Mothers for Peace organized an afternoon rally in San Luis Obispo followed by an evening pot luck dinner.

THE FINALE

In August of 1941 the U.S. Congress authorized the construction of the Pentagon for a then unheard of $86 million. From its conception the Pentagon was a matter of bitter controversy; some critics even claiming that this was just another effort at "empire building" by the military. Vickie Leonard, national Continental Walk staffer, while researching uncovered that the Pentagon supporters spread the word that the structure could afterwards be used as a veterans hospital or school or as a repository for government archives.

So . . . one possible scenario for the finale in Washington, D.C. (projected for October 16, now) is to take up the government's promise and march on the Pentagon to convert it to a hospital.

FUND RAISING EVENT

The national organizing for the Walk is critically short of funds. One event which we hope will help to raise the desperately needed money is a special collection to be taken in churches on Sunday, April 4, the eighth anniversary of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Dorothy Day, Rev. Ralph Abernathy, and possibly another major religious figure will sign a letter going out to religious constituencies making this appeal. Money to be raised from this event will be split between organizing in the South, where SCLC is preparing for a major effort, and the national organizing.